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Client Reference: EL00026CDC

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re PATENT APPLICATION of:
TADAHIRO OHMI et al.

Confirmation Number: 4153

Application No.: 09/827,307

Group Art Unit: 1763

Filed: April 6, 2001

Examiner: Alejandro Mulero, Luz

Title: PLASMA PROCESSING APPARATUS AND PLASMA PROCESSING METHOD

REPLY TO REQUEST FOR INFORMATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.105

Sir,

In reply to the Request for Information dated May 17, 2006, the period for reply being extended by the Petition for One-Month Extension of Time filed herewith, reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application based on the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claim 1 recites, *inter-alia*, the front surface of said auxiliary electrode is covered by an insulating material, and the back surface of said auxiliary electrode is not covered by the insulating material.

Claim 7 recites, *inter-alia*, the auxiliary electrode having a front surface covered with an insulating material and a back surface not covered by the insulating material.

Claim 8 recites, *inter-alia*, the front surface of said auxiliary electrode being covered by an insulating material and the back surface of said auxiliary electrode being not covered by the insulating material such that a difference in plasma density is created between the front surface of the auxiliary electrode and the back surface of the auxiliary electrode.

Claim 9 recites, *inter-alia*, the front surface of said auxiliary electrode is covered by an insulating material and the back surface of said auxiliary electrode is not covered by said insulating material such that a difference in plasma density is created between the front surface of the auxiliary electrode and the back surface of the auxiliary electrode.

Claim 10 recites, *inter-alia*, the front surface of said auxiliary electrode is covered by an insulating material, and the back surface of said auxiliary electrode is not covered by the insulating material.

The following discussion is for illustrative and explanatory purposes only. Any reference to a particular embodiment, figure, or passage of the instant application is not to be taken as an admission that any of the pending claims is limited to a particular disclosed embodiment.

As disclosed, the auxiliary electrode 104, an example of which is illustrated in Fig. 8, includes an insulator 902 formed on the surface 106. (See paragraph [0052].) The insulator 902 may be any one of several materials. (See paragraph [0052].) A comparison between an uncovered electrode and an auxiliary electrode with an insulator 902 on the surface 106 is provided in Fig. 9, for example. (See paragraph [0053].)

There is no discussion in Ohmi et al. '875 of an insulator (902) on a surface (106) of the auxiliary electrode (104). Instead, the auxiliary electrode 1503, made of silicon carbide (or aluminum, e.g.), may include an insulating film "on its surface." (See column 7, lines 47-51.) Similarly, the auxiliary electrode 1703, made from, e.g., tantalum, also may include an insulating film formed "on its surface." (See column 8, lines 41-45.)

There is no discussion in Ohmi et al. '875 of an insulating film formed on only a top surface of the auxiliary electrode.. Accordingly, one of ordinary skill would conclude from Ohmi et al. '875 that the insulating film was applied to the entire surface of the auxiliary electrodes 1503, 1703. In other words, one of ordinary skill would read Ohmi et al. '875 as requiring an insulating film on the top surface, the bottom surface, and the side surfaces of the auxiliary electrodes 1503, 1703.

It is respectfully submitted that this conclusion is supported by the detailed discussion in the instant application of the auxiliary electrode 104 having an insulator 902 only on its top surface. (See, e.g., Figs. 8 and 9.) Since the instant application was filed November 22, 2000, which is after the August 3, 1999 filing of the application that issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,719,875, this conclusion is reasonable.

It is respectfully submitted that the instant invention differs from that described in Ohmi et al. '875 in that the insulator 902 is applied only to the top surface 106 of the auxiliary electrode 104 rather than the entire, exposed surface.

It is further respectfully submitted that there are other differences between the claimed invention and the one described in Ohmi et al. '875.

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In view of the foregoing, allowance of claims 1 and 3-11 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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